

**Research project title:**

Research to understand best ways to incorporate an Indigenous lens in sustainability and resilience policy development

**Project description:**

One of Vancouver's key defining features is its natural surroundings—connecting residents and visitors to ocean, river, forests, and mountains. Yet, these natural surroundings are also the physical embodiment of our natural hazards. Our ocean is rising leading to coastal flooding, the Fraser River has potential to flood low-lying areas along Vancouver South, the forests that surround our City are at risk of wildfires that threaten human settlements, and generate devastating wildfire smoke, and our mountains signify fault lines and our ongoing earthquake risk. These types of disruptions not only threaten our resilience, but our sustainable future as a city. Yet, Indigenous Peoples on these lands have lived amongst these hazards, adapted to them, and mitigated them for millennia. Indigenous forest practices used controlled burns to reduce fuel loads, and our modern, extreme wildfire seasons are the result of decades of colonial anti-burning legislation.

Settlers and colonial organizations like Vancouver have a great deal to learn from Indigenous practices of sustainability, adaptation, resilience, and land management. In Indigenous worldviews, these concepts are deeply interrelated. As Vancouver develops Vancouver Plan—the City's first city-wide plan in 100 years and the second since colonization began—and seeks to define its goals around Reconciliation, Equity, Resilience, and Sustainability, City staff must first learn from Indigenous practices and ways of knowing in order to embark on transformational change.

The Scholar will conduct a review of key Indigenous documents and data to define/illustrate Indigenous sustainability, adaptation, resilience, and land management practices, concepts and ways of knowing. This work will inform the Resilience and the Ecological & Sustainable City streams of The Vancouver Plan's policy development process. The Scholar will be working with the Lead Resilience Planner on the Vancouver Plan and other staff working on resilience and ultimately make recommendations on the best way to incorporate an Indigenous lens on its Resilience policy work of the city-wide plan. This may include an identification of gaps, proposed amendments/additions, incorporation of new data sources, additional research and consultation, etc.

**Deliverables:**

- A review of key policy, academic, and historical documents regarding resilience, hazards, climate change, land use/community plans policy work conducted by the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səɪl wətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations and Urban Indigenous organizations, in particular the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, in addition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and other related sources
- A review of existing public data types and sources
- A review of the draft, high level resilience policy work emerging from the Vancouver Plan process
- A report that:
  - synthesizes the key document review
  - gives illustrations/examples of Indigenous practices, concepts and ways of knowing in relation to sustainability, adaptation, resilience and land management

- makes recommendations on incorporating Indigenous policy recommendations and practices, concepts and ways of knowing into the Vancouver Plan process and deliverables
- A presentation to the Vancouver Plan Policy working group

**Time Commitment:**

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 3-August 13, 2020
- The scholar is to complete hours between 12am-12pm Monday to Sunday, approximately 20 hours per week.

**Required/preferred Skills and Background**

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Ability to work independently
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience in Indigenous Planning, Sustainability, Climate Change work

We welcome all candidates to apply for this position. We especially encourage applicants who have strong knowledge and/or lived experience of Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous culture.